is 78%. A feasibility study report on such Coal-Only-Processing has also been received from M/s AXENS. A site-specific feasibility study on CTSL is planned to be carried out by Engineers India Limited with the help of M/s AXENS, NA, USA for which a Letter of Intent (LOI) was issued on 20.6.2005.

Further, OIL have initiated another feasibility study on the Coal Liquefaction Process using the technology of M/s Hydrocarbon Technologies Inc. (HTI) of USA. After completion of this study, Government will be in a position to evaluate the most suitable technology, using the coal available in the North-East Region.

(e) and (f) Since the technology is at a developing stage, it is too early to comment on the feasibility of the reduction of oil dependence through production of petrol from coal.

Review of Oil Exploration Policy

2912. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:
SHRIMATI JAMANA DEVI BARUPAL:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to take a re-look at its present oil and gas exploration policy;

(b) whether offering blocks under various rounds of the New Exploration and Licensing Policy has not attracted sufficient foreign capital;

(c) if so, what are the other main reasons for not introducing the exploration policy as processed by the Ministry; and

(d) what are the other steps he is considering to take in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) The Ministry, held a meeting of stakeholders at a CEOs conclave under the auspices of Petrofed on 7.7.2005 where the issue of modifying NELP after comparing the position in other countries was discussed. The Ministry has asked Petrofed to undertake a study on suggested improvements to be effected in NELP after taking the views of industry members.

(b) The recently concluded bidding round for exploration blocks under the Fifth Round of the New Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP-V) has been most encouraging. 69 bids for 20 blocks were received from 48 companies of which 27 were from abroad. The average number of bids per block is the highest so far compared to the four rounds of such offerings in the last 8 years. The number of foreign bids in this round equals the total number of foreign bids in all four previous rounds put together. However, the bulk of the awards have gone to Indian public and private sector companies, who gave the most competitive bids. In several cases, Indian lead company has foreign partners whose share of investment will be in the shape of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI).

(c) and (d) The offer of blocks under the NELP is an ongoing and continuous process. Before every round of New Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP) is launched, consultations are held with all stakeholders to suggest and incorporate improvements. This time also, suggestions emanating from the study undertaken by Petrofed as well as inputs from other organizations will be duly considered for improving the Licensing Policy before launching the next Round.

Supply of Kerosene to Maharashtra

2913. SHRI KRIPAL PARMAR:
SHRI BALAVANT *ALIAS* BAL APTE:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is an acute shortage of kerosene oil in various parts of Maharashtra; and

(b) if so, the steps taken by Government to provide adequate supply of kerosene in the State?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) In accordance with the policy adopted by the Government of India in 2000, the Kerosene (SKO) allocation for distribution under the Public Distribution System (PDS) to various States/Union Territories, including Maharashtra, was reduced every year beginning 2001-02 and till 2004-05, taking into account the number of LPG connections released in each State/Union Territory.